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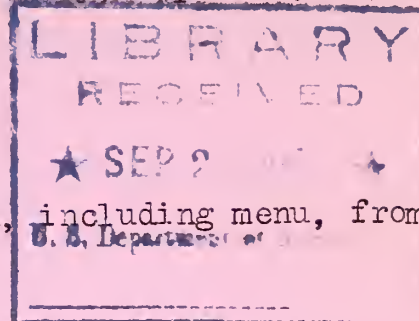
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Housekeepers' Chat

Wednesday, Sept. 24, 1930

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In 3Hh

Not for Publication



Subject: "Planning Meals for Children." Information, including menu, from Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Bulletins available: "Food for Young Children."

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I had intended to talk about children's clothes this morning. In truth, I had a very nice talk, all nicely prepared, on what the rioting generation should wear to school this fall. But just when I was rehearsing my talk, and thinking how very good it was -- along came the postman, with a letter which must be answered this morning. So there you are -- important questions must come first. The children's clothes can wait.

But before I begin with the important letter, let me quote you a piece I read last night:

"The more sophisticated the parent, the more simple the child. The more mondaine the parents life, the more secluded the life of the nursery. . . Old-fashioned, unaffected manners are the perfection of childish poise. A sun suit and square-toed sandals are the order of the day in the country, and the height of youthful town chic is a mere wisp of a cotton dress."

"A mere wisp of a cotton dress --" I saw so many pretty cotton dresses yesterday, and so many pretty cotton materials to make dresses of -- but as I said before, the dresses can wait.

Here is the letter, which caused me to postpone the dressmaking talk:

"Dear Aunt Sammy: I am greatly interested in your talks on food, and I should like some help on my own problem. I have three children: Betty Jean, a thirteen-year-old daughter who presents all the problems of adolescence; Robert, an eight-year-old, who eats practically everything that is set before him; and a two-year-old baby who eats when the spirit moves her. Take this morning, for instance. Betty Jean had no appetite at all; Robert bolted his food, and had to be reprimanded; the baby put her heels on the table, and grinned pleasantly at everybody, evidently expecting applause for her act. She had no interest in breakfast, as far as food was concerned, but she was quite willing to amuse the rest of us.

"I pride myself on being a modern mother, and I know what foods must be included in a child's diet. If my family were only a model one, and would fit into my neat scheme, I would have no trouble. Briefly, my problem is this: With a temperamental family, including adults and children; and a limited



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income, how can I be sure of feeding my family well, without making special preparation for each and every member of it? I know other mothers who are confronted with this same problem, and I am sure we would appreciate help."

Very well, I shall do my best to answer this letter. First, let's write down the list of foods ~~the~~ growing child needs, every day, so we'll have something to work with. I'll tell you, now, that you may need your pencils every few minutes.

The list of foods the growing child needs every day are these:

First, milk--one pint a day, at the very least. More, if the child can take it along with the other foods he needs.

Second, Vegetables--Potatoes, and two other vegetables. Don't forget to use green leaf vegetables, and tomatoes, quite often.

Third, Fruit--two kinds of fruit, one fresh, and, if need be, the other dried, or canned.

Fourth, Cereal-- This may be in the form of bread, or of breakfast food or both.

Fifth, Egg or Meat, or Fish, at at least one meal of the day.

Seventh, a few simple Sweets, to be served at the end of the meal, so they won't dull the appetite. Among the appropriate sweets for children are plain cookies, raising, dates, figs, jelly, molasses, brown sugar, maple sirup, and honey.

Now, let's see whether we can plan a good breakfast, for this temperamental family. How about this combination: Scrambled Eggs; Toast; Prunes; with Lemon Juice to make them tart; Milk for the children; and whatever beverage father and mother prefer.

Don't think this is the only well-planned breakfast I might suggest. By no means. This breakfast could be modified in probably a hundred ways, and still be well-balanced. For instance, I might have suggested oranges or grapefruit for breakfast, instead of prunes, but I had a special reason for suggesting prunes. You'll know, in a minute.

By the way, this is a one-course breakfast. This means putting all the foods on the table at one time, and letting the various members of the family eat them as they will. Don't take me too seriously, however; you can make a three-course breakfast of it, if you like.

Scrambled eggs and toast form the main dish. It might have been hash, or creamed fish, or any of the other good American breakfast dishes. Remember, however, that it is a good rule to provide one egg a day, for each child, and since father and mother usually eat their eggs for breakfast, the children might as well do likewise. With the eggs and toast, there is served a side dish of fruit. Almost any fruit can be used as a side dish, if prepared in a form that can be served that way. Orange juice in dainty glasses makes a good side dish. So do sliced oranges, or grapefruit peeled from the skin, or applesauce, or baked apples or berries.

As a beverage, the three children have milk. Breakfast is a good time to serve part of the daily allowance of milk.

I chose the prunes for breakfast so that I could recommend the use of fresh, unheated lemon juice with them. After the prunes are cooked, or better still, just before you serve them, squeeze some lemon juice on them. Do you know that when lemon juice is added to dried fruit, the dried fruit has more nearly the dietetic value of fresh fruit? That's a fact. Prunes with lemon juice also have a tart, pleasant flavor, which contrasts strongly with that of eggs.

Now, someone may ask, why didn't I include a cereal? As a matter of fact, I did. Toast is cereal, made into bread. Cereal foods include rolls, muffins, crackers, and so forth. Many people think that there is some peculiar virtue found in cereal breakfast foods which is not found in the same amount, and same kind, of cereal made into bread. If the daily diet, as a whole, is well-chosen, and if there are plenty of meat, eggs, milk, vegetables, and fruit in the diet, it is all right to use about half of the daily cereal supply in the form of refined products, such as white bread, and white rice. The other half of the daily cereal supply, may be used in the form of whole-grain products, such as graham bread, ~~shredded~~ wheat, or the whole grains of barley or wheat, often used in soup as a breakfast food.

The whole-grain products, or as nearly whole-grain as we can get, are necessary for their mineral substances, particularly iron. Of course, milk is a rich source of calcium. Therefore, if a child has a glass of milk for breakfast, bread serves all the purposes of a refined cereal. Or the milk can easily be taken at other meals, in the form of soups, sauces, or desserts.

Another point about cereals -- do you know that potatoes, and whole grain cereals, are surprisingly similar in composition? If there is plenty of milk in the diet, potatoes are just as good as a whole-grain cereal mush.

Well, I have talked at great length about food this morning. I hope you weren't bored, with so much food information. Of course a good many of you knew all about meal-planning, and what foods are good for children -- but then there are others to whom the subject is new.

The Menu Specialist has planned an appetizing children's dinner. Ready to write it down. Scalloped Fish; Buttered Carrots; Quick-Cooked Cabbage; Applesauce and Cinnamon Toast. Which is just what I'm going to serve for dinner tonight. We haven't had fish for some time, nor cinnamon toast.

Once more, the menu: Scalloped Fish; Buttered Carrots; Quick-Cooked Cabbage; Applesauce and Cinnamon Toast as dessert.

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